



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cole Chevrolet-Cadillac, Bluefield Car Dealer, Agrees to Honor Free Gas Offer

Attorney General Darrell McGraw announced today that his office had entered into an agreement with Cole Chevrolet-Cadillac, a car dealership located in Bluefield, West Virginia. In 2008, Cole Chevrolet-Cadillac was approached by an out-of-state marketing company with a "free gas" sales promotion. Under the terms of the promotion, Cole Chevrolet-Cadillac customers were offered \$500.00 in free gas if they test drove a vehicle. Consumers who attempted to redeem their \$500.00 in free gas quickly discovered there were strings attached.

Instead of receiving a gas card valued at \$500.00, consumers were given a voucher to complete and mail to FreeBeeGas.com. They were also required to pay a \$5.00 refundable activation fee and wait up to 6 weeks for their voucher to be processed. Only then did consumers discover that in order to obtain their "free" gas, they first had to purchase \$100.00 of the same brand of gas and send their receipts to FreeBeeGas.com. For every \$100.00 worth of receipts they mailed to FreeBeeGas.com within a given month, they received a \$25.00 gift card. In other words, consumers had to spend \$2,000 in order to receive the full value of the offer.

"It is unlawful to advise consumers that they will receive a free gift and tie any other requirements to the receipt of the gift," stated Attorney General McGraw. "All the hoops consumers had to jump through to get their free gas were buried in the fine print – a clear violation of the West Virginia Consumer Credit and Protection Act. Fortunately, once Cole Chevrolet-Cadillac was advised by the Attorney General's Office that this particular promotion violated West Virginia's Consumer Protection laws, the dealership acknowledged its mistake; agreed to make full restitution to its customers; and cooperated fully with our office. The Attorney General's Office applauds the dealership's commitment to honor the terms of its sales promotion."

Cole Chevrolet-Cadillac will provide full restitution to consumers who file complaints with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by August 12, 2009. In order to qualify for relief under this settlement, consumers must have received the free gas card promotion from Cole Chevrolet-Cadillac during 2008, must provide proof that they paid the \$5.00 activation fee to FreeBeeGas.com, and must file a complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division on or before August 12, 2009. Consumers who meet these requirements and live within 20 miles of Hometown Chevron will receive a \$500.00 credit at Hometown Chevron. Consumers meeting these requirements and living more than 20 miles from Hometown Chevron will receive a check from Cole Chevrolet-Cadillac in the amount of \$500.00.

"Consumers must always be wary of offers for free gifts, and remember that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," warns Attorney General McGraw. Consumers may request forms to file complaints with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by calling 1-800-368-8808 or download a complaint form at www.wvago.gov.

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